

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated.

“Speaking Made Easy” is a cooperative and reciprocal learning experience between high school and elementary students. Both groups of students benefit greatly from this program.

High school students enrolled in speech and drama classes were asked to develop three lessons that would help young children learn to speak before an audience. As a class, they decided upon the following objectives:

1. Students will build self-confidence and establish a level of comfort before an audience.
2. Students will learn how to develop a speech (introduction, body, conclusion).
3. Students will learn how to present an effective speech (voice projection, vocal aspects, gestures, visual props, posture, etc.)

Activities were developed for each objective, using the students' knowledge and skills related to public speaking and drama. The lessons and proposed activities were reviewed by the fourth grade teachers at a workshop prior to the first visit.

Approximately 16-20 high school students visited the elementary school on three occasions to present the lessons to the fourth graders, who would participate in the ESPA test in the spring. Each fourth grade class was divided into small groups (6 students per 1 high school presenter). Each session was 1-½ hours. High school students modeled the activity and gave the youngsters many opportunities to practice the skills being presented.

In addition to the lesson objectives set forth by the high school students, there were other objectives established for the success of **“Speaking Made Easy”**. The program provided:

1. An opportunity for varied age groups to participate in a cooperative learning experience.
2. An opportunity for high school students to enhance their Workplace Readiness Skills.
3. An opportunity to prepare fourth grade students for the speaking portion of the ESPA test and to improve scores from the previous year.

The methods used to implement and accomplish these objectives, is both innovative and easy to duplicate in any district which has a speech and theater department. The speech and theater instructor needs to train high school students as tutors. A cooperating teacher at the elementary level is needed to coordinate the activity with the high school teacher. The visitations were valuable and enjoyable experiences for both groups of students.

2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the Core Curriculum Content and Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standards.

“Speaking, both formally and informally, is critical to the learning process.”
(Descriptive Statement-NJ Core Curriculum Standards)

This program was especially designed to address one of the components of literacy—speaking. “It is noted that all students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.” (Standard 3.1) A program was needed to enhance these skills and so, “**Speaking Made Easy**” was created. It was decided to target the fourth grade students, first, who will be assessed by ESPA, and expand the program to other grades levels in the future.

The following indicators under Standard 3.1 were addressed:

Indicator #1- Students will use listening, writing, reading and viewing to assist with speaking.

Indicator #2- Students will adjust oral communication for different purposes and audiences.

Indicator #8- Students will speak before a group to express thoughts and ideas, convey an opinion, present information and tell a story.

Indicator #13- Students will use visual aids and nonverbal behaviors to support spoken messages.

The lessons and activities, planned by the high school students, incorporated the skills mentioned in the indicators above. In addition, packets were distributed to the classroom teachers containing suggested activities that could integrate speaking into other subject areas.

The practice was beneficial to the high school students, too, because it addressed several Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards. They are:

Standard 1 – All students will develop career planning and workplace readiness skills.

Indicator #8- Demonstrate occupational skills developed through work-based learning experience.

Standard 2- All students will demonstrate self-management skills.

Indicator #2-Work cooperatively with others to accomplish a task.

#5-Provide constructive criticism to others.

#9-Use time efficiently and effectively.

Working with younger students gave the high school students a feeling of responsibility and accountability. They did all the planning and implementation of the activities for the elementary students.

3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.

Several instruments were used to assess the success of the program in meeting its objectives.

Scores obtained from the 96/97 ESPA Speaking Component were used as a baseline. At this point, no formal training in speaking was given to the fourth grade students who participated in the assessment. Results were compared with 97/98 scores (after "**Speaking Made Easy**" was presented)

Scores were based on the following scale:	96/97 results	97/98 results
1-4 points on a scoring rubric (4 being best)		
4 point	7%	8%
3 points	26%	25%
2 points	28%	43%
1 points	19%	13%
OT=off topic	14%	3%
NR=no response	4%	3%

Results indicate:

1. More students were able to stay on topic.
2. More students responded.
3. The percentage of students in the "1 point range" moved up considerably to the "2-point range".
4. The best scores did not vary greatly.

The performance of the high school students was also assessed. The instrument used was a student evaluation. They were evaluated in the areas of attitude, organization and ability to effectively present materials. (The evaluation questions were written in the language of a fourth grader.)

The results were as follows:

	Excellent	Good	Fair
Attitudes	81%	16%	2%
Organization	85%	11%	3%
Presentation Skills	81%	17%	1%